

California State Senate

ALEX PADILLA
SENATOR, 20TH DISTRICT



April 3, 2013

Mr. Mark Emmert
President, NCAA
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

Dear Mr. Emmert,

I urge the NCAA to demonstrate moral leadership and adopt strong rules that require continued academic support and medical care for injured student-athletes.

Kevin Ware's gruesome injury was viewed by millions this past Sunday. And while we all hope that he will make a complete recovery and continue his athletic pursuits, you and I know that this is not always the case for injured student-athletes. His injury is a disturbing reminder that the NCAA lacks the protections and guarantees that would help injured student-athletes complete their education.

The stated core mission of the NCAA is to "integrate intercollegiate athletics into higher education so that the educational experience of the student-athlete is paramount." Despite this stated mission, the NCAA allows colleges and universities to summarily and unilaterally withdraw an athletic scholarship when a player is injured, with no obligation to provide an alternative academic scholarship. This often ends the student-athlete's career both as an athlete and as a student. To make matters worse the NCAA does not require that schools pay for medical coverage for student-athletes, resulting in student-athletes often being saddled with on-going medical bills. This must change. Neither injury nor poverty should dim the dreams of a student-athlete pursuing a college degree, particularly when their performance has enriched their college and the NCAA.

In 2012, I authored Senate Bill 1525, which was signed into law by Governor Brown and now legally requires California's Pac-12 universities to provide greater support for injured student-athletes. This law is the first of its kind in the nation and promises student-athletes important protections that the NCAA could have and should have instituted long ago. The four universities impacted by this law benefit from their share of a \$3 billion media contract. A small percentage of this media revenue will allow these universities to meet the standards established in SB 1525.



The spirit of this new California law is that with new revenues come new responsibilities. The law only applies to universities that generate on average over \$10 million in athletics media rights revenue a year.

The new law protects injured student-athletes by requiring that these universities provide an equivalent scholarship to student-athletes whose scholarship has been discontinued due to career-ending injuries resulting from participation with the intercollegiate athletics program.

The law will also improve graduation rates by requiring that the universities provide an equivalent scholarship to student-athletes who are in good standing, but have exhausted their NCAA athletic eligibility and have participated in an intercollegiate athletic program with a graduation rate of 60% or less. And, it improves medical coverage by requiring the universities to cover the medical premiums for low-income student-athletes and cover the deductibles for injuries resulting from participation in the intercollegiate athletics program.

These provisions are an important step forward in recognizing the contributions of student-athletes.

Collegiate athletics has become and will continue to be big business. With media contracts now in the billions of dollars, it is time for the NCAA to recognize its moral responsibility to student-athletes, raise its standards, and live up to its stated mission so that the educational experience of the student-athlete truly is paramount, regardless of injury.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this important issue. Meanwhile, if you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to call me at (916) 651-4020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Padilla', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end.

Alex Padilla

California State Senator, 20th District